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Communicating Impact: Strategies of Women's' Rights Nonprofit in Hong Kong

by

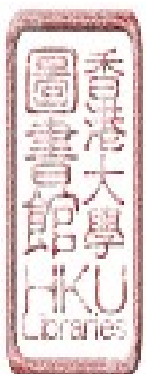
LAM PO YEE

Master of Non profit management

The University of Hong Kong

A Capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Nonprofit Management at the University of Hong Kong.

June 2016



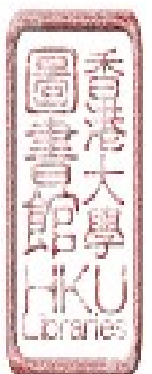
DECLARATION

I declare that this Capstone Project Report, entitled 'Communicating Impact: Strategies of Women's' Rights Nonprofits in Hong Kong', represents my work, except where the acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Lam Po Yee', written in a cursive style.

LAM PO YEE



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I would like to thank the Master degree of Nonprofit management and my supervisor, Dr. NOGUCHI Lori McLaughlin; the education and guidance throughout the learning processes. Thank you as well to everyone else participation in the in research, “Communicating Impact: Strategies of women’s’ right nonprofit organization in Hong Kong,” who provided me fruitful hands on information and experience on Women’s NPOs. A special thanks go to JJJ Association, the staff and volunteer team, who are so supportive of the pilot test for a deliverable of this Capstone Project.

I would like to thank the following interviewees for the research:

Kwok Ka Chai

Her Fund

Lisa Moore

The Women Foundation

Cat

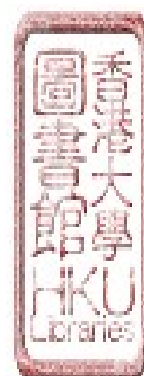
The Association for the Advancement of Feminism

Linda Wong

Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women

Shirley Hui

JJJ Association



ABSTRACT

The research will help women's rights non-profit organizations develop systematically of communicating the impact of their work. There is a gap between evaluation and public management in many women's rights organization in Hong Kong. Victimized the women, or building a certain image of women would gain the empathy from the potential donors, but also put more stigmas on women who contradict to the women's rights' work.

Therefore, the research will interview women's rights based non-profit organizations in Hong Kong in different sizes, to understand the strategy on communicating impacts of Women's right non-profit organization in Hong Kong. Also, the reasons that affect them to develop that strategy, the challenges of their application and provide some recommendations for the organizations with the similar background.

A deliverable will be developed to give recommendations to women's right non-profit organizations and relevant to marginalized and small groups. A deliverable, "Communicate your Impact: Social Marketing Guidebook for Grassroots NPO" was developed with the research to provide Grassroots NPOs and NPO with limited resources on marketing activity with guidance's and tools to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for societal changes.

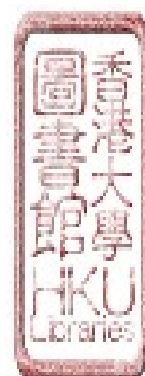
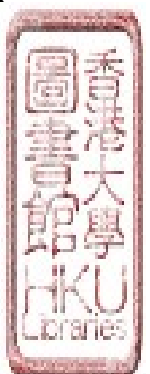


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND ISSUES

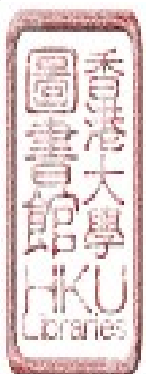
In Hong Kong, there are many women's right non-profit organizations strive to change the world with their mission, vision, and passion, to improve women's and girls' lives. However, if the local community does not understand or realize the importance of the good work from the women's right NPO does, it is impossible that the community is willing to create the changes neither in behaviors nor donation. On the other hands, for-profit companies sell their products through marketing, which increase the support to their business in loyalty and revenue. So, more and more NPOs adopted the marketing strategies from the business sector to increase donation and raise awareness of the community. However, there are controversies that marketing techniques and the visual representations naturalized the stigmas on women, which contradict to the good work that the women's right NPOs intended to do. Marketing of the non-profit organization, such as Women's right NPO is argued to be essential and justifying in a competitive environment.

IN HONG KONG CONTEXT

The application of marketing to the promotion of non-profit organizations and social causes was proposed decades ago. A growing number of NPOs and government agencies are turning to marketing as a tool for promotion and communication. There are many types of research and literature shown the strong relationship between marketing strategy and organizational success in United State, United Kingdom, Canada, and for international non-profits organizations. However, there is a lack of research and literature in Greater China, and also Hong Kong.

Women's right non-profit organization are living in a highly competitive environment in Hong Kong. There is 218 non-profit organizations related to women and girls registered in Hong Kong (Inland Revenue Department , 2016). In recent years, there are more studies in China to investigate in the women's non-profit management (Dai, 2014) .However, there is a gap in Hong Kong on the women's right non-profit organization and marketing.

This study aims to examine marketing practices adopted by Women's rights NPOs in Hong Kong and the challenges of their applications with a gender lens and provides recommendations for the organizations with the similar background.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

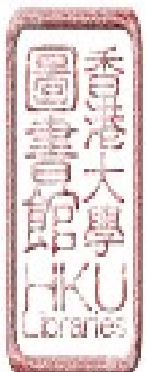
Effective communication in the nonprofit sector is growing concern by the public (Kotler and Levy, 1969; Kotler and Zaltman, 1971; Shapiro, 1973). Nonprofit organizations adopt techniques from the for-profit organization (Goerke, 2003), to survive in a competitive market, so they can gain sufficient support and money to achieve their mission. Some marketing literature shed the light on how nonprofit organizations adopt the marketing approach from commercial marketing and whether these techniques influence the NPOs' practices. These include marketing studies of professions and marketers, research about nonprofit management, literature on critical appraisal of nonprofit marketing and literature on the gendered representation of women in nonprofit marketing materials. Each is discussed in turn.

THE ADOPTION OF MARKETING APPROACH BY NONPROFIT SECTOR

"Why can't you sell brotherhood like you sell soap?" a classic question asked by G.D. Wiebe in 1952. He suggested that the marketing of products was usually effective, but marketing for social causes, however, usually fail. This critique was 60 years ago, but nonprofit organizations are still facing the same challenge nowadays. There are many scholars from marketing agreed that adopting marketing techniques and perspective is critical for nonprofit organizations (Andreasen & Kotler, 2003; González, Vijande, & Casielles, 2001; Kotler & Levy, 1969; Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Shapiro, 1974). These scholars argued that,

"...marketing is a pervasive societal activity that goes considerably beyond the selling of toothpaste, soap, and steel. Political contests remind us that candidates are marketed as well as soap; student recruitment in colleges reminds us that higher education is marketed; and fundraising reminds us that "causes" are marketed...attempt is made to examine whether the principles of "good" marketing in the traditional product areas are transferable to the marketing of services, persons, and ideas." (Shapiro, 1973)

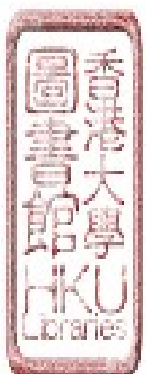
Although many non-profit organizations consider marketing as business techniques, Kotler and Levy (1969) suggested that marketing concepts are critical for all organizational activities including the non-profit organization, it is a modern tool for communicating the



organization's mission to their target publics. They also argued that all organizations perform marketing activities whether or not they recognized. So, the NPO should consider how to develop it in a better process. Also, the non-profit sector has the same situation of marketplace problems, such as membership decline, cost increase, and competitive market (Kotler, 1979). Therefore, marketing provides an excellent solution to the third sector to *"survive, grow and strengthen their contributions to the general welfare"* (Kotler P.,1979, p. 44). Regarding the characteristics of a non-profit organization are non-financial objectives and multiple stakeholders, such as donors, beneficiaries, staffs, volunteers. (Bruce, 1995), organizations have to maintain a competitive-collaborative relationship with other NPOs in the field, and the balance between financial and mission. These factors make NPOs very difficult to ascertain success and may lead to disregards of marketing.

The application of non-profit marketing has been developed further by the Kotler and Levy (1969), Kotler and Roberto (1989), Kotler and Zaltman (1971), Shapiro (1974) and Kotler and Andreasen (2003). They emphasized the importance for NPOs to adopt a more systematic approach to practice the marketing techniques strategically. At the late 1980s, guidelines, textbooks, and academic papers are rapidly growing due to the needs of the non-profit organizations, especially for the health and education field (Andreasen & Kotler, 2003) .

At the meantime, misconceptions of marketing appears in the field. According to Kotler (1979), the research asked nonprofit administrators whether they are interested, aware or enthusiastic in marketing, and whether they know how to apply marketing techniques in their organization. Surprisingly, results showed that most of the NPOs adopted marketing in their organization, but the concept "marketing" meant hard promotion to them. While another research has shown that more than 61 percent of the college administrator saw marketing as selling, advertising, and public relation, only a few respondents indicated that needs assessment, marketing research, product development, pricing, and distribution are also necessary (Kotler, 1982). Furthermore, many NPOs consider marketing as selling and promotion which used to sell something that people do not need (Bruce, 1995, p. 84). On the other hand, the research found that NPOs usually perform one or more than one marketing functions rather than adopt a comprehensive marketing strategy (Akchin, 2001).



CRITICISMS OF MARKETING FOR NON-PROFIT SECTOR

Marketing has been introduced in non-profit organizations for decades; some NPOs realize it helps them to achieve their mission, but some are still struggling for the adoption of marketing approach due to different reasons (Havitz, 1988; Novatorov, 2010; Roberto, 1991). Many non-profit organizations remain skeptical which adopt those marketing principles. Roberto in research at 1991 observed that *“marketing in the public sector has a love-hate evaluation”* (Roberto, 1991, p.81).

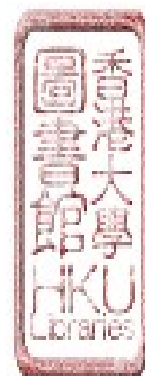
Marketing in the business sector had been accused of being manipulative, so did the non-profit marketing. Commercial marketing, *“primarily in persuading people to buy more things or in convincing them that one brand will satisfy a given need better than another brand.”* (Fox & Kotler, 1980, p. 30) While applying marketing to non-profit organizations, it is not surprise that people worry that it could be even more manipulative or potentially unethical (Laczniak, Lusch, & Murphy, 1979). They believed marketing techniques give power to a group or a person to influence public opinions on controversial issues, such as abortion and pornography. In contrast, Fox and Kotler (1980) argued that the word “manipulative” usually describe a dishonest way to influence someone in the means and ends. So, if the influencing process without any dishonest behaviors or distortion of the facts, the approach is not manipulative.

There are concerns about emerging marketing into the non-profit sector is arguably self-serving as profit might be involved in some cases (Fox & Kotler, 1980). For example, condom manufacturers benefit from supporting HIV prevention campaigns because they can gain through greater use of condoms. It is no doubt that the commercial enterprises will take advantage of the HIV social marketing programs, and in fact, it is the intention of many companies participate in the social change.

GENDERED REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN NPO

The term “Women” is a political subject; feminism criticizes the portrayal of women within the development discourse is neutralizing stereotypes against women (Dogra, 2007; Mohanty, 1991; Saunders, 2002).

It had been a long history that the advertisements in business sector use the body of women and girls to sell products (Rogers, 2014), *“the body language of girls is usually passive,*



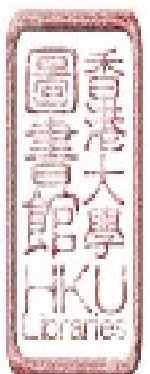
vulnerable, and very different from the body languages of boys and men” (Kilbourne, 2010). Women and girls are being objectified and sexualized in advertisements of jeans, cars, beers or even rice. Those images imply that women and girls are vulnerable and sexualized, and Kilbourne (2010) believed that these misconceptions and stereotypes put women and girls in danger of being sexual assault or abused. At the meantime, feminism reflects the similar situation among the non-profit sector. Dogra (2011) reviewed the public fundraising and advocacy messages from UK-based and international development NPOs. There are overwhelming 72 percent of the total people or characters in the messages are children and women, especially those among the fundraising messages and emergency appeals. Women are usually represented as mothers and nurturers.

“Such women, usually very young mothers, and carers, have downcast eyes and sad, helpless expressions. They are also found in queues waiting for food or medical aid, with aluminum or plastic mugs and bowls, inanimate objects that amplify the stories of deprivation and difference.” (Dogra N., 2011, p.335)

Cohen(2011) argued that these representations validate the underprivileged status of women and children, as the international NPOs emphasize the vulnerable face in the fundraising materials, which could *“enhances their ‘suitability’ for help.”* At the same time, Kellecher (1997) suggested that the naturalization from the representation of women leads to two problems. First, images of women in shocking nature, actually place their dilemma, *“within the realm of “nature, with occasional subhuman or superhuman features, safely removed from the “human and political spheres”.* (Kellecher, 1997, p. 229) Vulnerable images of women among the NPO materials imply that they are powerless victims of the problem. However, these form of images hides the historical and political background of the famines and extreme poverty. Second, the portrayals of the physical and emotional bonds between mother and child naturalized the female-in-nature motherhood, which is supposed to be private. Thus, it also raises very sensitive issues that are bringing the private motherhood into the public sphere for the consumption of donor.

Feminism also highlights the missing men situation of NPO public materials.

Kellecher(1997) found that the number of men appears in the international NPOs’ materials is extremely low, which is common in other NPOs as well. Even worse, most characters



shown in the NPOs' materials are "evil", such as abuser and corrupt leaders or associate with violent (Cohen, 2011). Men become problems, and always being dangerous or irresponsible to women, and segregate from the NPOs world, which further enhance the vulnerability of women.

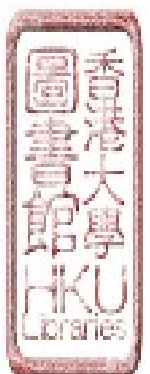
In sum, the marketing study of professions and professionals suggests that non-profit organizations could be able to adopt marketing approach strategically to create positive social or individual behavioral changes. However, criticisms of marketing as an unethical and manipulative tactic to intervene social changes. Moreover, there are critiques from feminism that the marketing materials and messages from the NPOs have arguably victimized the women and neutralized the problems they are facing. The literature indicates that marketing techniques are essential for NPOs to survive, to gain support and donation, but some argue that it be unethical to apply commercial marketing to the non-profit sector, in particular for those advocate for women's rights. Should the Women's rights' NPO adopt the marketing approach? It was a dilemma. Also, there is limit literature discuss the relationship between marketing in a gender perspective. To address the literature gap, this paper analyzes the marketing approach of 5 Women's' rights non-profit organizations in Hong Kong with a gender lens and understand their challenges and provide recommendations for women's' rights NGOs which want to adopt marketing approach in their work.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In-depth, qualitative interviews of the marketing strategy, needs, constraints and operational context of five selected NPOs in the women's rights sector in Hong Kong were conducted. To investigate these issues, data are collected from face to face interview, with executive staff members or person responsible for planning and executing the marketing function.

Selection of organizations based on the snowball sampling techniques. Organizations were identified through the tax exemption registration for the charitable purpose organizations in Inland Revenue Department of the Hong Kong SAR government with the following criteria, (1) state women's right or related issues in their mission statement; (2) beneficiaries are mainly women and girls; (3) based in Hong Kong. Also, organizations are

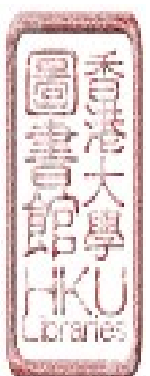


identified through the interview process. All respondents were asked to suggest other organizations they had worked with. Seven organizations had been invited to the interview. Eventually, five women's rights' non-profit organizations were selected, including Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women, Her Fund, The Association for the Advancement of Feminism, The Women's Foundation, and JJJ Association.

During each interview, interviewer conducted a semi-structural interview with director or executive staff and staff member who are responsible for the marketing function in the organization. The 45 to 60 minutes, face to face interviews were conducted between March to April of 2016. The interviews were recorded by hand and audiotape with the respondent's' permissions. The executive director or person who responsible for the marketing function the most were being interviewed. In sum, 2 of the interviewees are people are chief executive and three are responsible for planning and operating the marketing strategy in the organization.

Interviews were semi-structuralized through the questionnaires with follow-up questions, including basic descriptive characteristics of the organization, including the mission, staffing, and services or activities. Then, the interview was mainly open-ended, the questions were developed on based on the non-profit marketing literature (Akchin, 2001; Kotler P., 1979), respondents were asked to describe the marketing functions, perception on marketing and the experiences of the marketing practice. Questions included which marketing functions they practice in the organization, any strategy developed, what is the difficulties they experienced and how to overcome it.

The findings were compared with the Philip Kotler approach (1990) for strategic marketing management, to determine to which extent NPOs in the women's right sector to practice social marketing management according to the process.

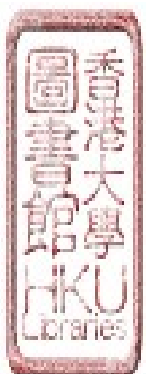


CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

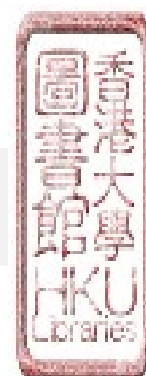
Five women's rights non-profit organizations were responded and conducted a 45-60 minutes' interview. All five organizations are based in Hong Kong and established from the year 1984 to 2012 respectively. The longest history organization among the interviewees is The Association for the Advancement of Feminism (AAF), which set up in 1984 by a group of feminists. AAF is a nonprofit organization which aims to eliminate discrimination against women and create gender equality for all sexes in Hong Kong by advocacy, campaigns, research, publications and resources development. They provide free legal advice for women about discrimination and sexual harassment and run a women resource center for public education on women issues (The Association for the Advancement of Feminism, 2016). Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women (ACSVAW) founded by a group of people who concerned women's rights, especially the sexual violence against women. They provide counseling service to the sexual violent victims and make recommendations to the government. ACSVAW also set up RainLily, the first one-stop crisis center for female sexual violence victims in Hong Kong (Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women). Her Fund is the only grant-making organization among the interviewees, which founded at 2004 by a group of women activists. Her Fund realized the women's organizations in Hong Kong were difficult to secure funding and resources, especially for marginalized and grassroots women's organization. Thus, they make grants to empower women and girls for creating changes in gender equality (Her Fund, 2008). JJJ Association, also the one of Her Fund grantees, and established in 2012, the newest organizations among the interviewees. JJJ Association aims to build a platform for female sex workers mutual support, fight against violent harm and urge for equal rights. It provides direct services to female sex workers including health and good education, legal advice, capacity building. (JJJ Association). Last but not least, the Women's Foundation, founded in 2004 by a group of like-minded women who identified the needs of women and girls in Hong Kong. The principles of the organization are action based on empirical research, which promotes full and equal participation of women and girls in all aspects in Hong Kong by research, advocacy and community education



programs (The Women's Foundation, 2016). Table 1 shown the respondents' organization background information, which could provide a clearer picture of the interviewees.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE BACKGROUND

	Year of establishment	Primary Target	Type of work	No. of staff
Her Fund	2004	Marginalized and grassroots women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant making Public education 	6
The Association for the Advancement of Feminism (AAF)	1984	Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy advocacy and campaigns Research and publication Resources developments 	2.5
Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women (ACSVAW)	1997	Female victims of sexual violent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct services Policy advocacy Public education 	17
The Women Foundation	2004	Women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Community Program Public education 	12
JJJ Association	2012	Female sex worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Services 	2.5



Five women's rights' organizations size ranged from small to medium and strived for women's rights and improvement of the equality status of women in different ways, including research, advocacy and services. They are all non-government subvented nonprofit organizations and need to sustain financially by themselves. According to their annual reports of 2014-15, their budget ranged approximately from HKD600,000 to HKD15,000,000. Moreover, the funding sources are usually from the grants application, individual donations, corporate donations and membership fee. Therefore, these five organizations need to communicate with their stakeholders about their mission, work and impact to sustain in both financial and community support.

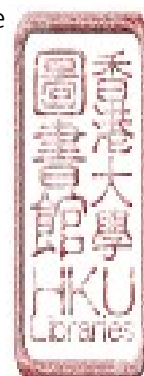
IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

There are some interesting insights from the responses. The organizational structure and management have influences towards their marketing strategy and activities. Also, different types of women's rights' non-profit organizations have their practice towards marketing.

To understand the operational environment of the organization, respondents were asked several questions to describe the structure of organization they worked for and the division of labor. They were first asked about their role in the organization, positions including Executive Director, Organizer, Communication officer and Advocacy manager, all of them are mainly responsible for the marketing function or familiar with the marketing strategy of the organization.

Her Fund, The Women's Foundation and ACSVAW have specific staff members or department responsible for the marketing functions; AAF responded that there is no particular staff for marketing, and JJJ Association responded that the marketing functions are sharing by the staff members of the organization. The Director of JJJ Association, Shirley HUI mentioned specifically,

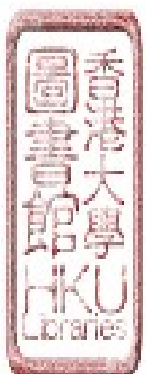
"We have only two full-time and part-time staff members here, the part-time staff is responsible for the programmatic work, and my other colleague and I have to share the organizational work." (Shirley HUI)



The board of trustee of JJJ Association is formed by sex workers, similar to the structure of a union. Usually, they are not participating in the daily operations of the organization or do not have marketing knowledge. Thus, staff members have to plan and perform the marketing activities by themselves. Another respondent shares the similar situation. The board of trustees of AAF are elected by the registered members every two years. Therefore, the focus of the organization usually changes after the transaction, and the job descriptions or the expectations of the staff member changes accordingly. Cat, the organizer of AAF, recalled that her responsibilities were different from the previous staff because of the transaction of the board. On the other hand, Her Fund and TWF have designated staffs responsible for marketing, which are Communication manager and officer. The situation of ACSVAW is very different, the setup Anti-Sexual Violence Resource Centre (Anti 480) on 2006, it is for the campaign, public education and policy advocacy of sexual violent. According to the Director of ACSVAW, Ms. Linda Wong, public education and advocacy are interrelated and impartible, they recognized the importance of the public education of anti-sexual violent since ACSVAW was established, and got sponsorship from the Community Chest on 2006 to establish the Resource Centre for raising awareness among the Hong Kong society.

MARKETING FUNCTIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS NON-PROFITS

Respondents were asked about the areas of marketing functions they had been practiced. All of them identified fundraising, public relations and advertising as their main marketing activities. The finding consistent with the researches done by Akchin (2001), Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009), both research have shown that these are the top three marketing activities within their respondents. Her Fund mentioned that fundraising is crucial to them as they make grants to other organizations. JJJ Association also uses marketing activities for the areas of fundraising and public relation and found it is very useful to kill two birds with one stone. Others 3 organizations describe more about the public relation to raise the awareness of issues they concern. For example, AAF uses many channels to communicate with their members, and conducts workshop to promote feminism value. All respondents agreed that they want to raise the public awareness with their mission, but the way they see marketing as a tool to influence the society are different. The communication officer from Her Fund stated,

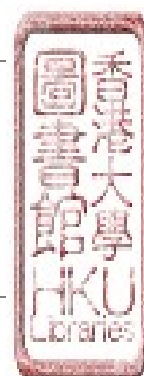


“Fundraising, communication, and grant making, almost all works of our organization are related to marketing; they are interrelated. For example, our recent activity ‘HUMAN LIBRARY’ aims to educate the public about the situation of marginalized women, but it also showcases the impacts of Her Fund, as we invited our grantee to share their stories in the activity.” (Ka-chai, KWOK)

Table 2 shown the details of the respondents marketing background. Other marketing activities they mentioned are market segmentation, media relations, and positioning. Surprisingly, when respondents were asked about the marketing activities they had been practiced, none of them mentioned about marketing segmentation, however, during the interview, all of them can describe their work with the target audience and how they identify which kind of people are them. Respondents did segment their target audience, by the group which is the most possible to accept their message and influential to the community. According to Kotler and Levy (1969), non-profit organizations undertake marketing whether they realize or not, so they should possess a better understanding of it. Akchin (2010) described this kind of non-profit organizations or staff memebr as “the Accidental Marketer”.

TABLE 2: MARKETING BACKGROUND

	Types of organization	Staff or department responsible for marketing functions	Target audience
Her Fund	Funder	Communication Officer	Young Professions for donors; Students for volunteers
The Association for the Advancement of Feminism	Advocacy	Organizer	People who have basic understanding of feminism and concern about social justice



Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women	Service delivery, Advocacy, Awareness raising	Anti-480 – Anti-Sexual Violence Resource Centre	Youth
The Women Foundation	Research and awareness raising	Communication Manager	Profession women
JJJ Association	Service delivery, Awareness raising	Director and program officer	Middle age adults and elderly; People who concern about sexual rights and sex workers' rights

At the mean time, the Women's Foundation is the only organization mentioned about marketing research,

"Research is the core of our work, it forms all of our programs, you cannot go by just what you observe, or what you hear because it is limited and lack of evidence." (Lisa Moore)

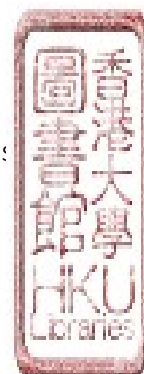
This finding also in line with Kotler's early finding in 1982, Akchin (2001), Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009) which is only a small proportion of the respondents recognized marketing research as an important process.

MARKETING STRATEGY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS' NPO

Five Women's rights non-profit organizations were asked about their marketing strategy, they share some similarities, but being unique at the same time.

1. Storytelling approach

As mentioned in the previous part, respondents use activities as tactic to attract their target audience. Ka-chai KWOK from Her Fund suggested that it is crucial to use interactive activities to relate participants to their beneficiaries, to appeal their emotions and relate the social issue to their personal experience. For example, they invited beneficiaries from their grantees, young mother and transgender woman to the fundraising activities, to share their



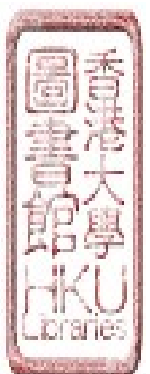
stories. Ka-chai KWOK emphasized that they are not only trying to appeal the feeling of marketing target audiences to drive donation, they are also sending an important message to them, *“Women are powerful, but they can also be an agent of change.”* Also, she mentioned that Her Fund believes the marginalized women are potential and powerful, they can be the agent of change, but not only vulnerable women.

“The problem that these women are facing is very complicated, it is about social justice and many other root causes, we want to ensure our donor understand as well.”
(Ka-chai KWOK)

Also, JJJ Association conducts a fundraising event, “Sex work 360°”, sex workers and volunteers become tourist guides, introduce the working environment of sex workers in Hong Kong to the participates. Also, participates can ask questions directly to the sex workers about their work and stories. Shirley HUI, Director of JJJ Association said this activity is very popular; it lets the participant talk with a sex worker face to face, and let them understand the difficulties and risks of sex workers. According to HUI, this approach eliminates the stigmas on sex workers effectively, participates are not reading a book about a sex worker, they can talk with a sex worker directly. Nevertheless, precautions must be taken. The dialogue between their marketing target and sex workers is being supervised by staffs to prevent any disrespect or insult towards sex workers.

However, storytelling approach is not suitable for all women’s rights NPOs. ACSVAW provide services to victims of sexual violent and break the stereotypes of sexual violent. Linda WONG, the Director of ACSVAW, agreed that it is very powerful for a victim telling her story, to let the public understand what he/ she is going through and how to support them. Also, this could benefit to the advocacy for a better police procedure on the sexual violent case, which could eventually improve the situation of other victims. However,

“For a victim of sexual violent, it is painful for her to tell her horrible experience once again, they do not want to let more people know about it. Some of them are very scared and want to hide at home all day long. There is a tension between service and advocacy.” (Linda WONG)



Storytelling, which allows the marketing target understands the organizational impact from inside out. However, the non-profit organizations require the sensitivity to protect the person who shares their story, including privacy, ethical consideration, and his/her feelings.

2. Marketing research

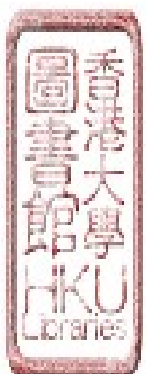
The Women's Foundation is the only respondent mentioned about needs assessment and marketing research, which could enhance the impact by understanding the needs of non-profit customers. Lisa Moore from the TWF explained about their research cycle; the organization conducts the research to identify the needs of women and girls in Hong Kong and then use the finding to design the program. At the meantime, they talk with stakeholders who are affecting by these findings to get their opinions. Also, each program has to conduct an independent assessment, impact assessment and evaluation. The evaluator is usually from external, as they can be more objective to assess the effectiveness of the program. Every few years, TWF conduct another research piece, to see whether or not the social problems of the previous research are still relevant, so the research cycle continuous. For example, TWF conducts research, "Women in male-dominated industries in Hong Kong" in 2014, the findings shown that only small proportion of women are holding senior management roles in luxury brand companies in Hong Kong comparing to the global average. (The Women's Foundation, 2014) Then, TWF followed up with a mentoring program for women leaders, to enhance the leadership skills and self-confidence of young women, based on the research findings.

Although other respondents did not practice a systematic marketing research as primary marketing activities, some of them did a certain level of marketing research. Her Fund and JJJ Association adjusted their marketing targets fundraising activities with the evaluation results and pro bono services from marketing company respectively.

3. Empowerment of women as powerful marketing message

Three women's NPOs emphasized women's power in their marketing message and believe that it makes them unique among women's NPOs.

Her Fund wants to deliver their message, "*She dares to change*" to their target audience, especially when their beneficiaries are marginalized and grassroots women.



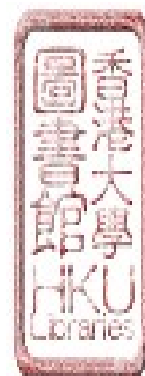
“We want to emphasize the magic moment of a marginalized woman started to change, through their story, and make people wonder why she changed.” (Ka-chai, KWOK)

She further explained the marketing message need to align with their mission, which is *“mobilizes resources and invests in empowering women and girls to create changes in communities for gender equality. (Her Fund, 2008) “Empowerment” is a very critical value for their organization. Therefore, they will, “emphasize the marginalized women are potential, and then explain how the social problems or injustice make them vulnerable, they can also become the agent of change if we provide necessary help.”* JJJ Association also elaborated on their marketing messages; they believe *“Sex work is work,”; “Sex worker’s right is a human right.”* Also, they insist that sex worker should be the one to tell their story in all fundraising and external activities, but not the organizer or staffs. So, the staff invites the sex worker who is willing to share her story in front of the public to those activities. Messages which delivered to the target audience can be very difference as every sex worker has a different story. HUI understands that there will be diversities and might not consistent with the messages they want to deliver, but she thinks it is not a problem. It is because the presence of sex worker in the movement shown that they are creating changes for themselves, and for the society. Therefore, the participation of sex workers is a very powerful message.

Cat, the organizer from AAF on the other hand, think they show the impact is a marketing message by their action. She believes, *“Gender is in everyday life.”* AAF is an excellent feminist group focus on advocacy and raising awareness of gender equality; they do not have direct services. She described AAF is not a mainstream women’s organization; they have a very strong gender perspective. For example, they include men in their Sexuality workshop, which is unique among non-profit organizations.

“Some people believes that the society should create a space for women, segregate men, so women can feel safe to speak or give opinions. However, we think the discussion on gender or sexuality should include men.” (Cat)

As they understand the target audience of AAF is not the general public, they explained in their activities advertisement about their rational, beliefs and practices, to ensure they attract people who already have the basic knowledge of gender and women’s issues.



In sum, five respondents share their marketing strategies, including using storytelling approach, target segmentation and needs assessment, women's power as marketing message to avoid victimization of women. These findings showed that five women's rights non-profit organizations aware and intended to prevent victimization and neutralize women's vulnerability. However, most of them perform more than one marketing functions, rather than adopt a comprehensive marketing strategy corresponding to Akchin(2001) and Kotler(1979).

CHALLENGES OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS' NPO MARKETING IN HONG KONG

Findings showed that the respondents also face many difficulties as a women's' rights non-profit organizations in Hong Kong.

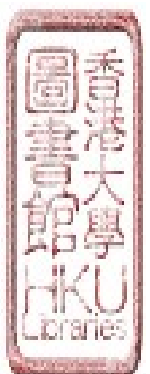
1. Limited resources and marketing professional

Three respondents mentioned about the challenges of scarce resources on marketing and attract marketing professional. JJJ Association, as noted before, they have 2-full time and 1-part time staff, which make them extremely difficult to do "all". Undoubtedly, the organizational priority is direct services; staffs are always occupied by the services for the sex worker community, which make them always left behind the marketing plan and activity. For example, they always forgot to take photographs for the activity as no one think or remember that they have to do it. Marketing is, *"always the last thing to do"*.

"When I answer the questions of a funding report, there are questions about communication strategy; I know nothing about that." (Shirley HUI)

In fact, she agreed that the staff's background constraints their work on marketing, as they do not have the knowledge and concept about marketing at all until they joined a capacity building program. She studied theology herself, and her colleague comes from culture studies background. In fact, only two respondents responded that the staff responsible for marketing functions in the organization came from marketing or communication background. Other came from social sciences or social work. The director of ACSVAW, Linda Wong commented that,

"It is extremely difficult to find people who understand gender issues and know about marketing at the same time. We are in short of these group of professional's in Hong Kong. Professional, who has certain degree of gender awareness, do not have myths



on sexual, violent victims, understand about marketing and communication, and passion...It is just so difficult to find.” (Linda WONG)

Her Fund at the meantime, trying to expand their marketing mindset by the external advisers and pro bono service on marketing activity.

2. Struggling to measure Gender equality and women’s issues

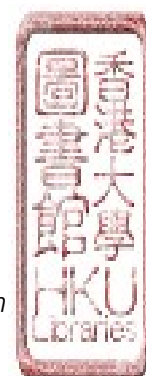
Also, respondents that found it was difficult to measure and demonstrate their impact on women issue with the context and gender perspective. All respondents mentioned that they are not only presenting the problems of women, but also the root causes behind it so the society could solve the problem entirely. As noted previous, some respondents realized that the contradiction between presenting a vulnerable image of women and empower women, like Her Fund. However, it is a challenging task to explain the historical and social context of the women’s issue in an easy way.

“Sometimes it is hard for me to explain our work with the context. Once I joined a nonprofit training workshop, others representatives can describe their work in only one or two sentences, like building a house for poor people. However, I just can’t explain what we are doing in one sentence.” (Ka-chai, KWOK)

KWOK planned very carefully on the marketing message; she said she need to ensure that there is enough explanation of the context or root causes of the women’s issue. In fact, other respondents are also very cautious in the presentation of women’s image in their marketing messages or materials. The Women’s Foundation use research findings to provide the context behind the women’s issues they addressed; JJJ Association use storytelling to fill in the gap of what put the sex workers into a vulnerable position; ACSAW has campaign tackle the norms against victims of sexual violent. All respondents have their mechanism to check whether their marketing message and materials represent an image of women that contradict to their organizational mission.

Also, AAF described gender issues were very difficult to measure due to the complexity,

“There are many indicators for gender equality, women in a higher position, higher income, but the woman might still need to take care of the family, nurturing children, do the housework even they have to go to work. Alternatively, the pressure on women



has to marry or have children. These kinds of gender expectation are not easily translate to numbers or measurement.” (Cat)

Again, these findings showed that all respondents are very aware not to victimized women or neutralized any stereotypes on women during their marketing activities. They even use this tactic as uniqueness to market their organization.

3. Oppositions against feminism in Hong Kong context

This finding showed an interesting situation of women’s rights non-profit organization in Hong Kong. All respondents responded that they had been challenged by certain people on their work, especially about gender equality or related to feminism.

Lisa MOORE from The Women’s Foundation recalled that there is an unexpected backlash on their research, “Gender Stereotypes in Hong Kong Media: A Scoping Study” in 2015. The research findings showed that gender stereotypes are prevalent in Hong Kong, and the idealized body images and behaviors of women are affecting women’s self-deprecation. (The Women's Foundation, 2015) Even it is a research report, they still received a lot of negative feedbacks from the public,

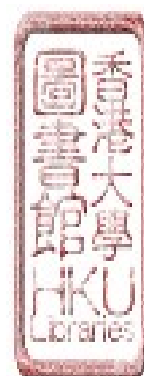
“We received a lot of negative feedbacks from the local press, particular who felt that it was a non-issue, that we are making much voice of nothing as women supposed to be sexy.” (Lisa MOORE)

Recently, more voices about the gender equality, in particular against feminism raised, certain people think that the status of women is already equal to men, or even more privilege. Therefore, gender inequality is a “non-issue” to them, which raised many criticisms against the women’s rights nonprofit organization.

Her Fund, KWOK said they also being attacked on the internet about their work, because attackers think they are only for women, not for men, and it is not fair.

Cat from AAF explained this issue,

“Gender issues are in every day life; the person needs to be very sensitive, so he/she can realize it is a problem. It could be happening while a woman interrupts during a



meeting because she is a woman. If people do not have the awareness or sensitivity, they usually think that this is not an issue, or even exaggerate, overdraw, fuss.”

These findings indicated that women’s rights’ NPOs in Hong Kong are facing the backlash of their work towards gender equality.

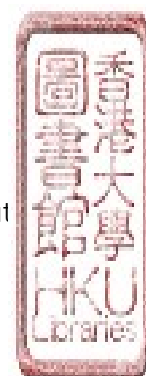
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this study show how the Women’s rights’ non-profit organizations in Hong Kong adopted the marketing approach, the perception of marketing, marketing strategy and challenges they are facing. Non-profit organizations had adopted marketing for decades. Research and literature emphasized that importance of marketing to nonprofit organizations. The findings support the general findings the literature; the marketing approach provides an efficient solution to them to survive and communicate organizational mission to their target audience. (Bruce, 1995; Kotler, 1979; Kotler and Levy, 1969; Kotler and Roberto, 1989; Kotler and Zaltman, 1971; Shapiro, 1974 and Kotler and Andreasen, 2003). However, there are lack of research or literature on the women’s rights’ non-profit organizations and marketing application, especially in Hong Kong context. Therefore, this study examines the marketing practices adopted by women’s rights’ NPOs in Hong Kong with a gender perspective.

Specifically, as the findings of the research indicated, marketing seen as a useful tool for women’s rights’ NPO in Hong Kong, and their marketing strategy and challenges had been discussed. These findings have important implications for nonprofit management practices.

The finding showed that respondents practice certain extent of marketing functions within their organizations, even though some respondents did not realize, or described it as a marketing activity. During the interviews, respondents usually describe their marketing activities in non-profit organization “language”, for example, public education and raising public awareness. Some of them avoid to use the word, “marketing”, as they consider marketing as “hard selling” or shown a negative impression on marketing as it comes from the business sector. Moreover, some respondents do not have the marketing knowledge, but they perform marketing functions accidentally, which Akchin (2010) described them as “*the accidental Marketer*”. Ideally, there should be a profession or someone from the marketing

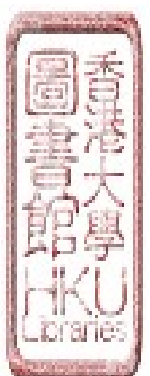


background within an organization. However, respondents in the women's rights non-profit organization mostly come from social sciences background. Also, due to the resources constraints, in particular for those who have a smaller annual budget, they are super multi-tasking, most of them perform more than one job function at the same time. It would be very difficult for them to adopt marketing approach in a well-planned situation.

Although the result of the study shown that respondents found it is difficult to measure gender inequality and related women's issues, they overcame the difficulties with different strategies. These strategies showed respondents have a very strong awareness and sensitivity on the criticisms of the women representation of women's NPO, which is contradicted to the literature (Dorga, 2007; Mohanty, 1991; Saunders, 2002). Respondents are putting efforts on explaining the historical and political background of the women's issues in Hong Kong, rather than using a sad woman picture or story to attract their potential donor. Moreover, the strategy of storytelling is a very common and useful tactics among the respondents, particularly for the women's rights NPO, who serve the marginalized or grassroots community. Storytelling can explain the complexity of problems that the women are facing. At the meantime, it empowers the person who shares his/her story. This strategy is recommended, especially for the NPO, who are struggling to explain the complexity of the social problems.

In general, these findings support the research and literature from marketing professions and researchers. However, the voices and perspectives from the third sector are missing. The findings showed that five women's rights non-profit organizations adopted certain marketing functions, as the suggestions from the marketing expert might not suitable for their situation. Therefore, they need a set of skills to access their ability, recourses, and other factors to develop their marketing strategy. The research findings demonstrated a lack of research or study from the non-profit management background to identify the issue from NPO perspective.

On the other hand, the phenomena of the opposition against feminism and gender equality another new finding, which is possibly become the main challenge for the women's rights' non-profit organizations in the future. Even though this research was not able to shed much light on the public attitudes on feminism and gender equality, the result of this study



confirmed that the phenomena are highly affecting the work of women's rights' NPOs, and also their image. Most notably, the internet culture further amplifies the effect on the misogyny discourse, in particular for the young people. Respondents used the internet as the channel to deliver a marketing message and had been attacked by detractors. Now, they are usually ignoring the message or simply reply to their comments. However, when these detractors' comments become a discourse, it will highly become an obstacle to the women's rights NPO. On the other hand, the finding showed that men started to appear in the marketing activities, as respondents recognized the importance of men's position for gender equality, and seldom appear in the past decades. This finding also contradicts to Dogra (2011), the research shown that men are missing in the public materials and activities of women's non-profit organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

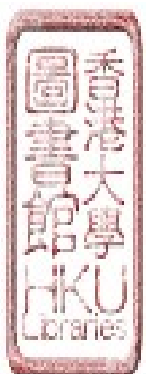
Even though the findings shown marketing for a non-profit organization is important, they still cost money, which is extremely difficult for some non-profit organizations, particularly those with a small budget. Since the non-profit sectors contribute to the society in many aspects, this study suggests that the commercial and third sector work together to solve this problem, which will eventually benefit to the civil society.

COMMERCIAL SECTOR: KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERT

First, the business sector had developed a comprehensive theory and procedures for developing a marketing strategy. There are many experienced marketers in the business sector; those could be very valuable resources for NPOs. They could provide training to the third sector on marketing knowledge for current staffs, which could fill in the gap of the NPOs who do not have the budget to hire a marketing position. Also, marketing companies could provide pro bono services to non-profit to enhance their capacity for social marketing or campaigning, which is beneficial to the company image and the non-profit sector at the same time.

THIRD SECTOR: BROADENING THE MARKETING MINDSET

The finding showed that non-profits sometimes think marketing as "hard selling", and consider marketing is skills from commercial sector, and sometimes "immoral." However, all respondents apply marketing competencies to a certain extent. It is useful and critical for the



non-profit to achieve their social mission. As Kotler and Levy (1969) mentioned about marketing concept, it is very natural to describe important sides of all organizational activities, including non-profit organizations. Therefore, the not-for-profit sector should broaden their marketing mindset, and develop an appropriate marketing product to serve target audience. For women's rights' non-profit NPOs, the choice they need to choose is not whether to adopt marketing or not to adopt marketing, as we cannot avoid it. The choice is whether to do it without planning or strategically.

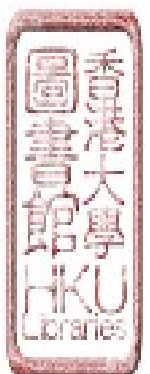
Nevertheless, the women's rights' NPOs work together to discuss and think of the solution of the phenomena of the opposition against feminism and gender equality in Hong Kong in recent years. All respondents are facing this issue, which is very possible to become an obstacle for the gender equality movement. If the general public remains to influence by the misconception or stereotypes of women, NPOs are very difficult to work. Therefore, women's rights NPOs and feminists should consider dealing with the situation together.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Before concluding, it is important to highlight some limitations of this research project. First, the sample size is small due to limited resources and time. Although it is an in-depth interview, it is still unclear whether it accurately capture the marketing practice in women's rights NPOs in Hong Kong. Also, it is possible that some of the results reflect bias. Therefore, the findings should be considered exploratory and suggestive.

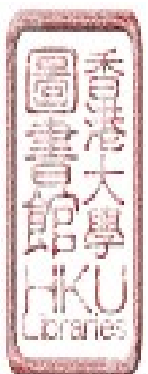
In closing, women's rights' non-profit organization is essential for the Hong Kong society for gender inequality and related social problems, addressing the governmental failure. Given the competitive environment and market pressure, marketing had been adopted by non-profit sector for decades. At the meantime, criticisms on the non-profit sector adopt the marketing approach, and the marketing or non-profit jeopardize the women situation appears. The research interviewed five women's rights non-profit organizations in Hong Kong, asked about their marketing practices, strategy, and difficulties. The findings showed that respondents adopt certain marketing functions, and they are highly sensitive to ensure those marketing activities have not created another type of women stereotype. This is



unfortunate that the marketing development of non-profit organizations is limited because of the resources. However, the commercial sector and third sector can work with each other, allow other to function better.

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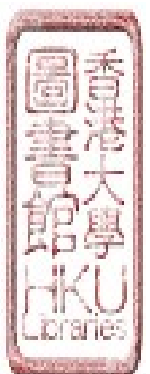
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